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Family Food Cent\$

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What are Shelf-Stable Foods?

Shelf-stable means that these foods are able to survive long periods of time on store or home shelves without spoiling. Unopened and sealed, these items can be kept in the pantry and do not need refrigeration. Such foods may be found in the canned food section of the grocery store but dried items like jerkies and fruits and baked items like crackers, cereals and granola are also shelf-stable.

Here are some examples of budget-friendly shelf-stable foods that can be used to make delicious, healthy meals:

- **Proteins:** Beans, lentils, peas (dried or canned), peanut butter, canned tuna, salmon, chicken and other meats, peanuts and other tree nuts
- **Dairy:** Powdered milk, shelf-stable milk, canned evaporated milk
- **Grains:** Rice, couscous, quinoa, tortillas, pastas, crackers, cornmeal, wheat flours, popcorn, oatmeal
- **Fruits and Vegetables:** Many varieties are canned or dried like raisins, apricots, prunes and unsweetened applesauce. Avoid fruit juices since they tend to cost more and often include extra sugars and preservatives.



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Canned Foods are Healthy Foods!



While fresh foods are usually recommended for meal preparation, studies show canned foods are comparable to cooked, fresh and frozen varieties in providing major vitamins and nutrients to the American diet.

Tips for selecting canned foods:

- Never choose canned foods that are past their expiration dates or have any flaw such as dents or bulges.
- Choose fruits canned in 100% juice versus syrup.
- Choose canned veggies with no salt added.
- Strain and rinse off salty or sugary liquids from canned beans, veggies and fruits.

Pantry Essentials Help Families Be Prepared

Life can be busy, and it can be hard to find time for meal planning and grocery shopping. By stocking your pantry and refrigerator with essentials, families can have access to items needed to create a simple, quick, healthful meal and avoid take-out and drive-thru. For example, spaghetti and tomato sauce can be sourced entirely from shelf-stable items. Here are some items to keep in stock and healthy meals you can create from them:

Meals	Items
Tuna salad sandwich or crackers	Canned tuna, mayonnaise, relish, celery, bread or crackers
Oatmeal	Oatmeal, walnuts, raisins/cranberries, milk
Quesadillas/burritos	Beans, cheese, tortillas, salsa
Stir-fry	Brown rice, frozen veggies, sauce





For a touch of spice and everything nice, add some canned green chilies to tuna sliders. You won't believe how much flavor this canned staple packs in! With a well-stocked pantry full of canned ingredients, like tuna and green chilies, it's easy to create delicious, homemade meals you can feel good about serving your family and friends.

Tuna Slider with Green Chiles

Makes 3 Servings

Ingredients:

5 ounces canned tuna, packed in water, drained and flaked
1 can chopped green chilies (1-4.25 oz. can)
¼ cup diced celery
¼ cup diced red onion
¼ cup reduced fat mayonnaise
2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro or parsley
6 slider rolls, split
Lettuce leaves

Shelf stable ingredients: canned tuna, canned green chilies

Directions:

In large bowl combine tuna, green chilies, celery, red onion, mayonnaise and chopped cilantro; toss to mix well. Top bottom half of each roll with lettuce leaves; top with some tuna mixture and top half of roll.

Nutritional Information per serving: Total Calories 143; Total Fat 4g; Saturated Fat ≥1g; Protein 10g; Carbohydrates 17g; Dietary Fiber 1g; Sodium 368 mg



Shredded chicken is coated with yogurt, curry powder and cilantro and combined with crisp celery and apples to give this salad delicious flavor with a refreshing "crunch." Chill and serve with crackers or use as a sandwich filling.

Curried Chicken Salad

Makes 4 Servings

Ingredients:

4 cooked cooled chicken thighs (about 3 cups shredded)
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
¼ cup low-fat yogurt
1 tablespoon curry powder (or more to taste)
2 celery stalks (diced or sliced)
1 apple (cored and diced)
¼ cup mandarin oranges, canned, drained
¼ cup Chopped fresh cilantro (and/or basil leaves)

Shelf-stable ingredients: canned chicken/tuna (optional), vegetable oil, canned mandarin oranges, curry powder

Directions:

Put chicken in a bowl and add remaining ingredients. Mix to combine. Cover and refrigerate at least one hour and up three days.

Notes

If you do not have leftover chicken, you can poach chicken. Put 4 boneless, skinless chicken thighs in a pan and cover with cold water (about 4 cups) and bring to a boil over high heat. Lower the heat and cook for 10 minutes. Turn the heat off, turn the chicken pieces over and set aside for 20 minutes. Remove the thighs with a slotted spoon and set aside to cool completely. Shred and prepare recipe as directed. You can also substitute 2 cans of drained light tuna, instead of chicken thighs.

Nutritional Information per serving: Total Calories 75; Total Fat 5g; Saturated Fat 1g; Protein 7g; Carbohydrates 2g; Dietary Fiber ≥1 g; Sodium 110mg



Cinnamon Raisin Balls

Makes 6 Servings

Ingredients:

- 1 cup almonds
- 1 cup raisins
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon

Shelf-stable ingredients: all

Directions:

Rinse the raisins and almonds with water. Toss them in the food processor with the cinnamon. When sufficiently mixed, form into balls or bar shapes.

Throw cinnamon, raisins and almonds together into a food processor and you have an easy and yummy breakfast on the go.

Nutritional Information per serving: Total Calories 232; Total Fat 15g; Saturated Fat 1g; Protein 6g; Carbohydrates 24g; Dietary Fiber 4g; Sodium 91mg



Black Bean and Couscous Salad

Makes 8 Servings

Ingredients:

- ½ cup chicken broth, low-sodium (or low-sodium vegetable broth)
- ½ cup couscous (uncooked)
- 1 ½ teaspoons apple cider vinegar
- ½ teaspoon cumin, ground
- 1 Tablespoon fresh lime juice (optional)
- 1 can black beans, low-sodium (drained and rinsed)
- ½ onion, medium (minced)
- ½ red or green pepper (minced)
- 1 cup frozen corn, thawed (or ½ cup canned whole kernel corn)
- 2 Tablespoons fresh cilantro (optional)

Shelf-stable ingredients: broth, couscous, apple cider vinegar, cumin, black beans, canned corn

Directions:

Before starting to prepare the recipe: Wash red or green pepper and cilantro (if using). Wash and juice the lime into a small bowl (if using). Drain and rinse the black beans and corn (if using canned corn). Collect, mince, and measure all ingredients.

Bring broth to a boil in a small pot, and stir in couscous. Cover the pot, and remove it from the heat. Let stand for 5 minutes. In a large bowl, whisk together oil, vinegar, cumin, and lime juice (if using). Add beans, onion, red or green pepper, and corn to the vinegar and oil mixture, and toss. Fluff the couscous well with a fork, breaking up any chunks. Add to beans and vegetables, and mix well. Taste. Add salt and black pepper if desired. Add cilantro (if using) and serve. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours. Eat within 3 to 5 days.

This simple recipe is perfect for dinner tonight and a packed lunch tomorrow. It's full of colorful veggies and is filling and tasty.

Nutritional Information per serving: Total Calories 28; Total Fat ≥1g; Saturated Fat 0g; Protein 1g; Carbohydrates 5g; Dietary Fiber 1g; Sodium 30g